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For -  
41 files  
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date of memo)

TO: The Acting Secretary  
FROM: ARA - Viron P. Vaky

AX053

Current Human Rights Situation in Argentina

Following is a summary description of current human rights indicators in Argentina as seen by ARA:

DISAPPEARANCES

1979 - 13 unaccounted for disappearances in five months since February 1, 1979 (last disappearances on May 13)

1978 - 55 monthly average of disappearances throughout 1978

1977 - 180 monthly average of disappearances throughout 1977

1976 - 300 monthly average of disappearances throughout year after March coup

Prospects: Videla and Viola appear determined to end disappearances, but they still face some resistance from hardliners. Chances that disappearances will have virtually ceased by the time of the IACHR visit are reasonably good.

PEN PRISONERS

1979 - Interior Minister Harguindeguy announces that GOA holding 1,723 under PEN, June 29

1978 - GOA holding approximately 2,900 under PEN as of December

1978 - GOA acknowledges holding about 3,500 under PEN at beginning of year

Prospects: GOA has told us that it will reduce PEN prisoners to level of 800 to 1,000. It

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS  
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director  
☒ Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny  
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appears determined to hold a number of people in this status because they are beneficiaries of the last Peronist amnesty and/or it does not feel confident it could prosecute them successfully in court.

#### ACCOUNTING FOR DISAPPEARED

1979 - No public accounting; GOA working to revise presumption of death laws; GOA working secretly to account internally for disappeared; General Viola acknowledges publicly that the disappeared "will be absent forever." ??

1977 - GOA claims publicly that disappeared are in self-exile, were killed in shoot-outs with security forces, or underground.

Prospects: GOA will probably alleviate legal problems of the relatives of the disappeared and may accept public responsibility for "disappeared" in general; it is unlikely to provide detailed information, on an official basis, on individual cases.

#### PRISON CONDITIONS

1979 - GOA has published uniform regulations for treatment of prisoners, although the regulations are not yet fully and uniformly enforced. Some of the worst facilities have been closed.

Prospects: The authorities appear interested to improving conditions further, partly to reduce and eliminate criticism from international agencies.

#### RIGHT OF OPTION

1979 - GOA has given permission to 18 persons to leave Argentina for the U.S., out of more than 100 certificates (13 have entered under our Hemisphere "500" Parole Program)

1978 - GOA authorized U.S. Consular Officer to visit Parole Program applicants in prison in November

1977 - GOA reactivates constitutional "right of option" in November


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Prospects: GOA may somewhat accelerate approval but total number of approved cases is likely to remain relatively small; in many cases, GOA apparently would prefer to set prisoners free within Argentina, keeping them under surveillance, while denying exile. General Viola has again assured Ambassador Castro that action will be accelerated.

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